

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Chief, COAPS
Via : AD/COD
FROM : Chief, BR/OCD

DATE: 30 November 1950 25X1

SUBJECT: Coordination of the Federal Biographic Program

1. Three alternative methods to overcome present biographic inadequacies are:

- a. Centralize all basic records in CIA.
- b. Centralize only records relating to specified categories of biographics.
- c. Establish and maintain a central index to basic records held elsewhere.

2. Alternative "c" is least practical for:

- a. It is ~~virtually impossible~~ ^{difficult} to keep such an index ^{100%} current.
- b. An index does not contain sufficient information for positive name identification. *Neither do dossiers, in many cases. 90% of names identifiable by dossier could be typed in index.*
- c. As a location finder it would become unwieldy because of the large number of duplicate references.
- d. It represents increased space and personnel requirements without demonstrable benefit, and conversely if these requirements are absorbed internally, a decrease in substantive production.

3. Alternative "a" is the only truly satisfactory solution because centralization of biographic files would:

- a. Obviate the duplication of extensive basic records (as distinct from researcher's desk files).
- b. Constitute in itself an uncomplicated central index.
- c. Enable all categories of biographic information to be controlled centrally.
- d. Speed up general biographic services

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e. Serve as a central record which may be most economically bulwarked in the compilation of published works through both overt and covert research.

f. Ensure that the principal biographic files in the Government are periodically microfilmed for storage as a duplicate repository to be used in case of emergency.

4. Alternate "b" is basically a compromise plan which may be carried out in several ways, the two extremes being: (1) departmental sorting of documents containing specified types of biographic data requiring manipulation by category, the distribution of these documents (appropriately identified as to category to be classified) to the central registry, extraction of the information at the central registry accompanied by its adaptation for machine selection; (2) attachment to CIA biographic staff of a nucleus of departmental biographic specialists who would exercise control over the selection of types of information specified by the parent departments, but conforming to the processing procedures of BR.

Variations to these two themes may be worked. The principal advantages of the compromise plan are:

a. Departments assigned primary responsibility for military, political, etc., types of biographic data would exercise control over what went into the basic files.

b. The Departments would direct collection efforts to close existing gaps in biographic coverage in areas for which they have priority needs.

c. The information would be uniformly processed, uniformly catalogued for manual and machine manipulation of categories, etc., and uniformly stored.

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JOHN M. HUTZEL

I don't disagree with the basic philosophy, but I am afraid this overlooks insuperable problems of security (i.e. counterespionage etc) and of vested interest.

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